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## JACOBI, AND THE PHILOSOPHY OF FAITH.

BY ROBERT H. WORTHINGTON.

The result of Kant's "Critique of Pure Reason" was the critical annihilation of dogmatism. The three ideas of Reason — the immortality of the soul, the freedom of the will, and the existence of God as a Supreme Being — were shown to be insufficient, incapable of proof, and apt to lead to the most glaring paralogisms and sophisms. As applied to our cognitions, these ideas are purely *regulative*, but are not *constitutive*, principles ; they do not really advance our knowledge, being merely intellectual spurs which stimulate the mind ever to seek a higher unity and the unconditioned. This is the negative side of the Kantian philosophy ; the corresponding positive is to be found in the "Critique of Practical Reason." If speculative Reason were powerless to prove theoretically the existence of God and of the soul, as postulates of practical reason these ideas must be retained, since they are so closely interwoven with our moral nature as to have become an essential part of it.

Henceforth the course of German philosophy, so far as regards the theory of knowledge, was towards Rationalism, or Intellectualism, which has always been a favorite philosophy with the Germans. On the principles of this doctrine it is in reason alone that truth and reality are to be found. "Experience affords only the occasions on which intelligence reveals to us the necessary and universal notions of which it is the complement ; and these notions constitute the foundations of all reasoning, and the guaranty of our whole knowledge of reality." While the theorizing mind in Germany was busily engaged in forging links in the chain of Rationalistic thought, the religious sentiment, dissatisfied with the negative results of such a system, clung all the more firmly to its positive beliefs. A few great intellects, rightly interpreting the results of all previous metaphysics, sought refuge in the traditions and institutions of the past, and struggled to utter what tens

of thousands *felt*, but could not express, inculcating a reverence for that higher authority which transcends the human, and professing a mystic recognition of the “unseen agencies which direct the course of nature and history.” Speculative thought in Germany, after Kant, owed much to the ancient philosophy, and many of the leading doctrines of the early Greek schools were again brought to light and life. The immense influence of these ancient systems upon modern thought goes to prove that the mind is necessitated to think in certain definite ways, and shows the irresistible tendency of philosophy to repeat itself. As the great Pascal remarks: “Nature confounds the Pyrrhonists, and Reason the Dogmatists. Our inability to prove anything is such as no Dogmatism can overcome, and we have an idea of the truth which no Pyrrhonism can overcome.”

As we have said, according to Kant, the three ideas of Reason, as mere practical suppositions, afford no theoretic certainty—but, rather, remain open to serious doubt. It was in order to do away with this uncertainty, this despair of rational knowledge, that Jacobi, the philosopher of faith, sought to establish the principle of direct or intuitive knowledge, of natural and direct faith, in antithesis to the position of theoretic, system-making thought. This was but a natural and logical development of Kant’s own notions of an intuitive understanding. Certainly, says Jacobi, the highest ideas of Reason—those that partake of the divine—are not to be attained by demonstration, which would be no more than making finite that which is infinite; but this impossibility of proof and certain comprehension is the very nature of the divine. In feeling, then, in direct intuitive cognition, Jacobi found that certainty which Kant had demonstrated not to be in theoretic Reason. What lies beyond our discursive understanding, those judgments which transcend Reason, whose truth or probability we cannot discover by sensation and reflection, are the objects of faith.

Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi was a Christian philosopher in the highest sense of those words. He was a man of pure, elevated, noble character, of deep piety, and of a truly poetic

temperament. With the single exception of Kant, he was the most original thinker of his times. His writings are elegant, and show forth a profound and harmoniously-developed mind. This elegance and profundity of his philosophical works have gained for him the name of the German Plato, and certainly he has succeeded in reviving much of the spirit of that "cheerful domain of ancient thinking." His writings are not composed systematically, but "rhapsodically—as the grasshopper jumps." "It was never my intention," he says, "to set up a system for the school; my writings sprang from my innermost life, following a certain historical order; in a certain way, I was not the author of them—certainly not of my own will so, but drawn on by a higher power which I could not resist."

In its negative, polemical aspect, the leading principle of the philosophy of Jacobi is the positive affirmation that a speculative philosophy, when fully and consistently developed, must necessarily lead to Spinozism; and Spinozism, he says, is combined fatalism and atheism. The man whose spirit is satisfied with Spinozism cannot, by any force of "pitiless logic," be persuaded into an opposite belief; his premises are certain, and his reasoning logically consistent. But such a one, says Jacobi, gives up the noblest elements of spiritual life. This, then, is the conclusion which Jacobi draws from the "drama of the history of philosophy": "There is no philosophy but that of Spinoza. Whoever can suppose that all the works and ways of men are due to the mechanism of nature, and that intelligence has no function but, as an attendant consciousness, to look on — him we need no longer oppose; him we cannot help; him we must leave go. Philosophical justice has no longer a hold on him; for what he denies cannot be philosophically proved, nor what he asserts, philosophically refuted." What resource is there left? "Understanding, isolated, is materialistic and irrational; it denies mind, and it denies God. Reason, isolated, is idealistic and illogical; it denies nature, and makes itself God." How, then, do we cognize the supersensual? Jacobi answers, through *feeling, faith*, reason. The flight by which we raise ourselves above

the sphere to which, he says, the understanding is confined, is through faith in God and divine things. This is the *salto mortale* of human reason. As Ueberweg well interprets this deep-seated faith of Jacobi: "There lives in us a spirit which comes immediately from God, and constitutes man's most intimate essence. As this spirit is present to man in his highest, deepest, and most personal consciousness, so the Giver of this spirit, God Himself, is present to man through the heart, as nature is present to him through the external senses. No sensible object can so move the spirit, or so demonstrate itself to it as a true object, as do those absolute objects—the true, good, beautiful, and sublime—which can be seen with the eye of the mind. We may even hazard the bold assertion that we believe in God because we see Him, although He cannot be seen with the eyes of this body. It is a jewel in the crown of our race, the distinguishing mark of humanity, that these objects reveal themselves to the rational soul. With holy awe man turns his gaze toward those spheres, from which alone light falls in upon the darkness of earth." This abstract separation of thought and feeling, Jacobi was hardly able to bring into agreement, and he himself confesses: "There is light in my heart, but when I seek to bring it into the understanding, it is extinguished. Which illumination is the true one—that of the understanding, which discloses, indeed, well-defined and fixed shapes, but behind them only a bottomless abyss; or that of the heart, which, while it sends its rays of promise upwards, is unable to supply the want of definite knowledge? Is it possible for the human mind to attain to truth unless through union of both elements into a single light? And is such a union attainable without the intervention of a miracle?" Jacobi failed to effect a reconciliation of this difference of the heart and the understanding, and calls himself "a heathen with the understanding, but a Christian with the spirit."

There is a slight tinge of mysticism in Jacobi, but this seems rather to heighten the beauty of his thoughts than to detract from their force or value. Perhaps, too, it was this very mysticism that preserved him from falling into that all-absorb-

ing spirit of Rationalism which then reigned in Germany. The positive elements of his philosophy coincide very nearly with the doctrines of the Scottish school. His doctrine of the immediate knowledge of the external world, especially, is identical with that of Reid; and his doctrine of reason, or faith, is nearly convertible with the common-sense doctrines of Reid, Stewart, and Sir W. Hamilton. Jacobi carefully distinguishes, in the first place, between his faith and faith on authority. Blind belief is irrational, and is merely supported on the authority of others. This is far from being the nature of his belief, which is founded rather on the strongest, deepest subjective convictions. Then, again, belief is not purely passive, and, therefore, is not a mere receptivity of the soul; it is reason, and must be opposed to the understanding, which is concerned only with finite and conditioned knowledge—in other words, with the products of demonstration. Now, demonstration is but a continuous repetition of the art of drawing conclusions from certain premises, through a middle term, which links together the terms of the conclusion, though it does not itself appear in the conclusions. But the ultimate principles, the axioms necessary to all reasoning, and from which demonstration begins, must be known without a middle term; they must be self-evident—*immediately* known. Moreover, they must be known more accurately than the conclusions deduced from them, and they must be more knowable, *absolutely* and *by nature*. The most general principles, then, are not susceptible of demonstration, because all direct demonstration presupposes as its basis or premise something higher and more general than that which is to be proved; something, also, which must be at least as certain and obvious as the thing to be proved. The more general truths, then, must be immediately certain. This deduction of a thing from its proximate causes Jacobi calls comprehension—we comprehend only what we can explain. The ultimate truths, then, must be absolutely incomprehensible; but there is an organ of the truth which apprehends them, and this private organ of the truth, in which consists the superiority of man over the brute, is the belief of Reason.

Jacobi affirms that all ultimate and absolutely simple facts are facts of Consciousness, and in the veracity of Consciousness he has an implicit faith.' To him the great fact of the Duality of Consciousness was clear and manifest. He declares that we are immediately conscious in perception of an *Ego* and a *non-Ego*, known together, and known in contrast to each other. As Hamilton says — and in this he but gives clearer utterance to what was the belief of Jacobi — " In this act I am conscious of myself as the perceiving subject, and of an external reality as the object perceived ; and I am conscious of both existences in the same indivisible moment of intuition. The knowledge of the subject does not precede, nor follow, the knowledge of the object ; neither determines, neither is determined by, the other." It is the universal judgment of mankind that there is an external world, existing entirely independent of us. But any attempt of speculative philosophy to deduce the knowledge of it from our understanding must prove vain and useless — a mere empty logomachy. The duality of spirit and nature cannot be explained by the supposition of some higher principle above the antithesis, in which both the terms meet. Such a supposition is not an explanation, and only advances the problem one step further. The reconciliation must, therefore, if attempted at all, be accomplished in the opposing sides themselves ; and this is possible in one of two ways : either from the position of the material side to explain the ideal, as in Spinoza's materialism ; or from the ideal side to explain the material, as in Schelling's idealism. Consciousness, to Jacobi, declared our knowledge of material qualities to be intuitive or immediate, not representative or mediate. And thus it is that we find the peculiar and appropriate sphere of Reason in immediate contact with the great realities of existence — God, liberty, immortality, the true, good, and beautiful. " In this highest sphere, especially, it appears how Reason is the *life* of the mind. It alone can reveal to us the objects which form the food of that life. And it is only in proportion as we are in harmony with these that the revelations can be made."

Jacobi spurns the proof of the existence of God which is derived from the evidence of design in the universe. " Is it

unreasonable to confess," he says, "that we believe in God, not by reason of the nature which conceals Him, but by reason of the supernatural in man, which alone reveals and proves Him to exist? *Nature conceals God*; for through her whole domain Nature reveals only fate, only an indissoluble chain of mere efficient causes without beginning and without end, excluding, with equal necessity, both providence and chance. An independent agency—a free original commencement within her sphere, and proceeding from her powers—is absolutely impossible. Working without will, she takes counsel neither of the good nor of the beautiful; creating nothing, she casts up from her dark abyss only eternal transformations of herself, unconsciously and without an end; furthering, with the same ceaseless industry, decline and increase, death and life; never producing what alone is of God—and what supposes liberty—the virtuous, the immortal. *Man reveals God*; for man, by his intelligence, rises above nature, and, in virtue of this intelligence, is conscious of himself as a power not only independent of, but opposed to, nature, and capable of resisting, conquering, and controlling her. As man has a living faith in this power, superior to nature, which dwells in him, so he has a belief in God, a feeling, an experience of His existence. As he does not believe in this power, so does he not believe in God; he sees, he experiences naught in existence but nature, necessity, fate." In other words, "We must recognize a God in our own minds before we can detect a God in the Universe of nature."

We have now seen how Jacobi traced back all our knowledge to a primitive revelation made by Reason—pure objective feeling—of the realities independent of thought. He mainly occupied himself in vindicating the authority of this primitive revelation, and failed to give any complete systematic exposition of its contents. With him, philosophy began and ended in mystery—the primitive revealer itself is mysterious and inexplicable; and the omnipresence of that great Something—which passes human comprehension, which the most unsparing criticism leaves unquestionable—is a transcendent mystery. The belief in these mysteries has nothing to fear from the most inexorable logic; nay, rather, such a belief

the most inexorable logic shows, according to Herbert Spencer, to be more profoundly true than any religion supposes. In the words of a reviewer cited by Chalibæus, "Jacobi is like a solitary thinker, who, at the dawn of day, has found some ancient riddle hewn in an eternal rock. He believes in the riddle, but in vain endeavors to solve it. He carries it about with him the whole day, coaxes out of it some important meaning, coins it into doctrines and images, which delight the hearers and animate them with noble wishes and presentiments; but the solution fails, and he lays himself down to rest, at eventide, in the hope that some divine dream, on the morrow, will give to his longing the true interpretation in which he has so firmly believed."

Such was, in outline, the philosophy of a very great intellect, and it did not go unheeded. Hamann, the "Magus of the North," Herder, and Jacob Fries took up the thread where it had been dropped, and, by a blending of Jacobian conceptions with the philosophy of Kant, developed more fully the doctrine of Faith. For consistent Christians, the doctrines of these great thinkers must be the only reconciliation of the opposite poles of philosophy, the only true end of metaphysics. The very innermost soul of the process of development in modern philosophy, as a high authority justly says, has not been a mere immanent dialectic of principles, but, rather, a long struggle between traditional religious hopes and beliefs, deeply rooted in the modern mind and heart, and the purely scientific results of modern investigations in the fields of mind and nature, together with the attempt at satisfactory conciliation. Theoretically, there is not possible any such conciliation; pure, logically-working reason is powerless to bring together the two antithetical poles. In the end, the instincts of the heart, the *intuitive* perceptions of reason, must form for the Christian philosopher the only true *criteria* of truth and reality. To adopt the language of Mr. Wallace, "The very terms in which Lord Bacon scornfully deprecated one great result of philosophy must be accepted in their literal truth. Like a nun, a virgin consecrated to God, she produces no offspring; she bears no fruit." . The end of metaphysics, the foundation of Religion, and the beginning of Science is inscrutable mystery.

Three centuries of transcendent speculation have failed to reduce to logical unity the conflicting differences of Spirit and Nature. On the other hand, Science has not succeeded in explaining one single fact of being or becoming in the world of phenomena. As Herbert Spencer justly remarks : “ Every deeper and more general power arrived at as a cause of phenomena has been at once less comprehensible than the special ones it succeeded, in the sense of being less definitely representable in thought ; while it has been more comprehensible in the sense that its actions have been more completely predictable. The progress has thus been as much towards the establishment of a positively unknown as towards the establishment of a positively known. Though as knowledge approaches its culmination every unaccountable and seemingly supernatural fact is brought into the category of facts that are accountable or natural, yet at the same time all accountable or natural facts are proved to be in their ultimate genesis unaccountable and supernatural. And so there arise two antithetical states of mind, answering to the opposite sides of that existence about which we think. While our consciousness of nature under the one aspect constitutes Science, our consciousness of it under the other aspect constitutes Religion.” So long as this process of differentiation is incomplete, more or less of antagonistic spirit must continue ; but when by critical examination of the human intellect, in its original state, all its powers and processes have been completely mapped out, and the utmost limits of possible cognition are established, the causes of conflict will diminish. “ And a permanent peace will be reached when Science becomes fully convinced that its explanations are proximate and relative ; while Religion becomes fully convinced that the mystery it contemplates is ultimate and absolute.”

There are those who say that there is too much idealism in Metaphysics ; that the nature of man’s spirit demands something more realistic. They claim that Science will satisfy these wants ; that the whole history of philosophy has been that of a long period of preparation ; and that a new era dawns with the transformation of Science into Philosophy. To this

there is but one reply — it is becoming every day more certain that Metaphysics is the sea towards which all Physics naturally drift us. Mark the gradual blending of modern scientific speculation into Berkeleyanism! But Metaphysics is out of court; Science rules the day. Positive Science, leaving out of view the debts it owes to Metaphysics in the way of its very first principles, can only gratify man's curiosity; can enlarge the bounds of his information, if you will, but does not satisfy his inner spiritual wants. But certain it is that this is an age of critical analysis, scientific conquest, skeptical unrest. To many minds, the primitive conceptions have been lost in the elaborations of the temples, and so, long-accepted theologies easily give way to scientific iconoclasm. The spirit of investigation produces an artificial and insincere indifference to all that concerns man's most intimate essence. "Criticism is endured, and even courted; and the vulnerable point of an inherited faith is surely found. Earnest minds sadly but manfully give up their ancestral traditions, and refuse to seek repose in any creed that cannot undergo the extreme test." But the vulnerable points are not the essential points; these, a logical criticism, however, pitiless and unsparing, leaves unquestionable. Even touching material phenomena, men no longer accept, unless in a limited way for its beauty, the language of myth and tradition; they *know* better. "The glory may remain, but verily the dream has passed away." Yet where can a justification be found? The ultimate truths which metaphysics arrives at are not more mysterious and inexplicable than those which are the end of Science. In Science, the deepest truths we can ever reach are simply statements of the widest uniformities in an experience of the relations of matter, motion, and Force; and these latter are but symbols of the great Unknown Reality. Science does nothing more than systematize an experience, reaching even a higher and higher uniformity, but unable to attach to such uniformity anything more than a relative necessity. Religion and Science are thus in the final analysis, when reduced to their fundamental ideas, reconciled; they both end in inscrutable mystery. Restless, unsatisfactory Skepticism, or reverential Faith, follows.

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Nature and of the Elements; (12) Outlines of the Religion and Philosophy of Swedenborg; (13) Zwei Briefe Ueber Verursachung und Freiheit im Wollen; (14) Hartmann, Duehring, and Lange; (15) George Stjernhjelm; (16) Philosophische Monatshefte; (17) Verhandlungen der Philosophischen Gesellschaft.	
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(1) Zeitschrift fuer Philosophie und Philosophische Kritik; (2) Professor Watson on Science and Religion; (3) Principia or Basis of Social Science; (4) Soul Problems, with other Papers; (5) A Series of Essays on Legal Topics; (6) Percy Bysshe Shelley as a Philosopher and Reformer; (7) Elements de Philosophie Populaire; (8) Inaugural Address, by S. S. Laurie; (9) The Historical Jesus of Nazareth; (10) A Critical Account of the Philosophy of Kant; (11) Philosophische Monatshefte, Leipzig, 1877; (12) Die Phantasie als Grundprincip des Welt Processe; (13) Philosophie de la Religion de Hegel; (14) The Princeton Review.	
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(1) Krauth's Vocabulary of the Philosophical Sciences; (2) Stirling's Burns in Drama, together with Saved Leaves; (3) Pfleiderer's Religions Philosophie auf Geschichtlicher Grundlage; (4) Bascom's Comparative Psychology; (5) Eucken's Geschichte und Kritik der Grundbegriffe der Gegenwart; (6) Bascom's Philosophy of Religion; (7) American Journal of Mathematics.	

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## ERRATA.

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- Page 45, line 28, for *such*, read *each*.  
 Page 51, line 23-4, for *a plain man*, read *explain now*.  
 Page 54, line 5, for *assuming*, read *assuring*.  
 Page 56, line 19, for *Free*, read *True*.  
 Page 56, line 28-9, for *diction*, read *dictation*.  
 Page 57, line 34, for *interest*, read *increase*.  
 Page 60, line 12, for *law-rule*, read *law—rule*.  
 Page 67, line 17, for *the reappear*, read *there appear*.  
 Page 383, line 21, for *sobriatur*, read *solvitur*.  
 Page 400, line 11, for *on*, read *or*.  
 Page 401, line 8, for *succeeded*, read *superseded*.  
 Page 402, line 30, for *an*, read *our*.  
 Page 402, line 33, for *an*, read *our*; for *even*, read *ever*.